

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please substitute the following claims for the same-numbered claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of matching a query fingerprint to a plurality of file fingerprints, the method comprising the steps of:
 - determining a plurality of partial features of each of the file fingerprints,
 - for each partial feature, deriving a list of all file fingerprints which have said partial feature;
 - determining a plurality of query partial features of the query fingerprint;
 - identifying file fingerprints comprising partial features that match said query partial features of said query fingerprint;
 - deriving a ranked list of the file fingerprints based on said identifying; and
 - performing a one-to-one matching of the query fingerprint only with file fingerprints comprising a pre-determined rank in said ranked list.

2. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the method comprises associating a discriminate score with each partial feature based on the number of file fingerprints which have said partial feature as one of their partial features, and the step of deriving the ranked list of the file fingerprints comprises updating scores for matches between the query fingerprint and individual ones of the file fingerprints based on the discriminate

scores of one or more partial features identified in the individual file fingerprints as one of the query partial features.

3. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the partial features comprise minutiae feature sets.

4. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 3, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the minutiae feature sets each comprise a set of minutiae features for which a geometric separation between any two minutiae in it falls within a predetermined range.

5. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 4, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein a number of minutiae features in each minutiae feature set falls within a predetermined range.

6. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 2, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the discriminate score is calculated in a manner such that it has higher values for partial features that occur in a smaller number of file fingerprints.

7. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 6, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the discriminate scores are further based on a total number of partial features in all of the file fingerprints.

8-14. (Cancelled).

15. (Previously Presented) A computer program, recorded on a medium, for instructing a computer to conduct a method of matching a query fingerprint to a plurality of file fingerprints, the method comprising the steps of:

determining a plurality of partial features of each of the file fingerprints;

for each partial feature, deriving a list of all file fingerprints which have said partial feature;

determining a plurality of query partial features of the query fingerprint;

identifying file fingerprints comprising partial features that match said query partial features of said query fingerprint;

deriving a ranked list of the file fingerprints based on said identifying; and

performing a one-to-one matching of the query fingerprint only with file fingerprints comprising a pre-determined rank in said ranked list.

16. (Currently Amended) The computer program as claimed in claim 15, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the method comprises associating a discriminate score with each partial feature based on the number of file

fingerprints which have said partial feature as one of their partial features, and the step of deriving the ranked list of the file fingerprints comprises updating scores for matches between the query fingerprint and individual ones of the file fingerprints based on the discriminate scores of one or more partial features identified in the individual file fingerprints as one of the query partial features.

17. (Currently Amended) The computer program as claimed in claim 15, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the partial features comprise minutiae feature sets.

18. (Currently Amended) The computer program as claimed in claim 17, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the minutiae feature sets each comprise a set of minutiae features for which a geometric separation between any two minutiae in it falls within a predetermined range.

19. (Currently Amended) The computer program as claimed in claim 18, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein a number of minutiae features in each minutiae feature set falls within a predetermined range.

20. (Currently Amended) The computer program as claimed in claim 16, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the discriminate score

is calculated in a manner such that it has higher values for partial features that occur in a smaller number of file fingerprints.

21. (Currently Amended) The computer program as claimed in claim 20, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the discriminate scores are further based on a total number of partial features in all of the file fingerprints.

22-23. (Cancelled).